

Listing of the Claims

1. (Original) A suture retainer for securing a suture relative to a body tissue, comprising:  
a first section including an extension member, and  
a second section configured for receiving the extension member, the first and second sections being bondable together with the application of an energy source.
2. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture is interposed between the first and second sections.
3. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 2, wherein the first and second sections are bonded together to secure the suture.
4. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the first section includes a pair of parallel channels.
5. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 4, wherein the extension member is interposed between the pair of parallel channels.
6. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 5, wherein the second section includes a channel configured for receiving the extension member.
7. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 6, wherein the suture includes first and second ends one each positionable within the parallel channels.
8. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 7, wherein the extension member is positioned within the channel, such that the suture is interposed between the first and second sections.
9. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the first section comprises a pair of parallel extension members.

10. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 9, wherein the second section includes a pair of parallel channels configured for receiving the parallel extension members.

11. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 10, wherein the suture is interposed between the parallel extension members.

12. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 11 wherein the parallel extension members are positioned within the parallel channels, such that the suture is interposed between the first and second sections.

13. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the extension member is a center post.

14. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 13, wherein the second section includes a flange defining a passage configured for receiving the center post.

15. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 14, wherein an exterior surface of the center post and an interior surface of the passage are textured.

16. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 15, wherein the suture is wrapped around the center post.

17. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 16, wherein the center post is positioned within the passage, such that the suture is interposed between the center post and the an interior surface of the passage.

18. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the first and second section are textured.

19. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the first and second sections are interconnected.

20. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer is made of a biodegradable material.

21. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer is made of a heat shrink material.

22. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer includes viable cells.

23. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the suture retainer includes pharmaceutical agents.

24. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 1, wherein the energy source is selected from the group consisting of radio frequency energy, laser energy, microwave energy, ultrasound energy, contact heating energy, and combinations thereof.

25. (Original) A suture retainer for securing a suture relative to body tissue, comprising a top surface including a channel extending along the length of the top surface and an extension member proximal to the channel, wherein the extension member is deformable to cover the channel with the application of an energy source.

26. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the suture is positioned in the channel.

27. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 26, wherein the channel has a channel diameter greater than a diameter of the suture.

28. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the top surface includes a pair of parallel channels.

29. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 28, wherein top surface further comprises a pair of extension members one each proximal to one each of the pair of parallel channels.

30. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 28, wherein the extension member is interposed between the pair of parallel channels.

31. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein top surface is textured.

32. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the suture retainer is made of a biodegradable material.

33. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the suture retainer is made of a heat shrink material.

34. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the suture retainer includes viable cells.

35. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the suture retainer includes pharmaceutical agents.

36. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 25, wherein the energy source is selected from the group consisting of radio frequency energy, laser energy, microwave energy, ultrasound energy, contact heating energy, and combinations thereof.

37. (Original) A suture retainer for securing a suture relative to body tissue, comprising a substantially cylindrical body portion defining a central passage configured for receiving the suture, the body portion being made of a heat shrink material, such that body portion shrinks to secure the suture with the application of the energy source.

38. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 37, wherein the body portion is made of a biodegradable material.

39. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 37, wherein the body portion includes viable cells.

40. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 37, wherein the body portion includes pharmaceutical agents.

41. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 37, wherein the energy source is selected from the group consisting of radio frequency energy, laser energy, microwave energy, ultrasound energy, contact heating energy, and combinations thereof.

42. (Original) The suture retainer according to claim 37, wherein the passage is textured.

43. (Original) A method for securing a suture relative to body tissue, comprising;  
providing a suture retainer including a body portion configured for receiving the suture, the body portion being deformable to secure the suture with the application of an energy source,  
positioning the suture relative to body tissue with at least one section of the suture extending from the body tissue;  
positioning the at least one section of the suture adjacent to the suture retainer;  
applying a force between of about 1 lb. to 20 lbs to the suture retainer; and  
transmitting energy from the energy sources to the suture retainer, such that the a portion of the suture retainer is plastically deformed about the suture securing the suture retainer to the suture.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43, further comprising discontinuing the transmission of energy when the suture retainer begins to deform.

46. (Original) The method of claim 44, further comprising increasing the force applied to the suture retainer upon discontinuation of the energy.

47. (Original) The method of claim 43, wherein the applied force is a constant force.

48. (Original) The method of claim 43, wherein the energy source is selected from the group consisting of radio frequency energy, laser energy, microwave energy, ultrasound energy, contact heating energy, and combinations thereof.